Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:24:01. Referral.

File reviews, a review of data, and interviews with a variety of district staff suggested a problem with the district's referral process. Contrary to the district comprehensive plan, the procedures used within the district do not allow educators to initiate a referral without first going through the TAT process. A referral made verbally by a parent cannot be acted upon until that parent completes a district referral document. Through review of 21 files for high school students, reviewers found 16 had no record of referral happening prior to the junior high level. Staff interviewed suggested there are an unusually high number of initial referrals during junior high and high school, frequently for behavior concerns.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

Parents, teachers, and other district personnel, public or private agencies and private schools will easily access the referral process for students at all grade levels that may be in need of special education.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

By September 1, 2003 file reviews and interviews with a variety of district staff and parents of children initially referred will indicate that the referral process is easily accessed by teachers, parents and others for the benefit of students who may be in need of special education.

- 1.) 100% of all referrals received after January 1, 2003 will be documented appropriately.
- 2.) District staff will review files annually to ensure appropriate documentation of referrals.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

By July 2002 one psychometrist was contracted to provide uniformity and consistency in evaluation and reporting.

By August 2002 Special Education teachers were transferred to better meet the referral requirements at other building sites.

By October 31, 2002 Special Education Director will in-service all district personnel on policy and newly revised form and referral procedure.

By November 2002 the BFSD will begin using the revised referral form.

By November 30, 2002 Special Education Director will publish special education information regarding the referral process.

Staff and parent in-services will be held for behavioral concerns (September 12, 2002 in-service "Love & Logic") and annually thereafter regarding positive behavioral interventions.

Referral forms will be available in:

- 1.) Teacher's lounge in every school building.
- 2.) Special education classrooms.
- 3.) The Special Education office at the High School.

All district staff will receive training annually on appropriate documentation for referrals.

The district will ensure Free Appropriate Public education by implementing the following:

- 1.) When a teacher request a child to leave the classroom, an incident report form will be completed which includes the reason for removal. Report will be entered into the district data system.
- 2.) Upon referral to counselor or principal, staff will document removal from regular classroom and report will be entered into data system.

3.) District staff will ensure notification of Special Education office of any student exhibiting emotional concerns (i.e. suicidal, ODD, aggression, anxiety, withdrawal, hyperactivity, conduct problem, depression, somatization, atypicality, attention problem, learning problem, self-esteem, self-reliance, relation w/parents, interpersonal relations, cognitive psychosomatic, ADHD, restless/impulsive, emotional lability).

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

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PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
A full time school psychologist/psychometrist/behavior specialist will be on staff	July, 2002
starting July 1, 2003. New staff has been hired as has a new Special Education	August, 2003
Director and all staff will be given appropriate in-services starting in August of 2003.	September,
All returning staff have been given training on policy and referral procedure. New	2002
referral forms are in place and available in teacher's lounges, special education	October, 2002
classrooms and at the office of special education. Staff and parent training was held on	November,
September 12, 2003 on behavioral concerns and a follow-up training is scheduled for	2002
September 11 and 12, 2003. Information on special education was published in the	May, 2003
local paper and all parents will receive information on special education in the August,	September,
2003 back-to-school bulletin. All documentation of referrals is entered into the	2003
SimsNet data system for each access and tracking. Chrissy Peterson, Special	
Education Director from the Meade School District conducted an IEP review on May	
8, 2003 and found the files to be complete and to have the necessary components to	
meet the rules and regulations of Special Education.	
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
All behavioral reports are entered into the District data keeping system. This data is	January, 2004
readily available to the Special Education Director and other District Administrators.	
There were 41 referrals received during the fall of 2003. 40 of the referrals went to full	
evaluation. 36 student files were reviewed to verify referral documentation. 30	
referrals came from parents, 11 referrals came from teachers.	

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:24:02. Duties of a district after referral.

File reviews, a review of data, and interviews with a variety of district staff suggested a problem with the district's referral process. Contrary to the district comprehensive plan, the procedures used within the district do not allow educators to initiate a referral without first going through the TAT process. A referral made verbally by a parent cannot be acted upon until that parent completes a district referral document. Through review of 21 files for high school students, reviewers found 16 had no record of referral happening prior to the junior high level. Staff interviewed suggested there are an unusually high number of initial referrals during junior high and high school, frequently for behavior concerns.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

All referrals will be documented and acted upon without unreasonable delay keeping all relevant parties informed.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

By September 1, 2003 file reviews and surveys from a variety of district staff and parents of children initially referred will indicate that the referral process is effective in identifying children in need of special education at all grade levels.

By September 1, 2003 parent surveys will show that referrals were acted upon by the district in a timely manner and parents are knowledgeable of their rights under IDEA. 100% of staff and parents of children initially referred will be queried and 90% will respond positively to experiences with referral.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

By October 2, 2002 district staff will receive a written copy of the Special Education referral process.

The Special Education Office will track all referrals.

The District will establish a file for all students referred who are **not** placed and also put referral in the cum file.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
All referrals are tracked and included in the student cum file	September 2003
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
On February 27 th , 2004, an inservice will be provided to staff members on the referral form used by the District. Referrals are also put in the students cum file upon arrival in the Special Education office. The referral process was also thoroughly discussed.	February, 2004
There were 41 referrals received during the fall of 2003. 40 of the referrals went to full	

evaluation. 36 student files were reviewed to verify referral documentation. 30	
referrals came from parents, 11 referrals came from teachers.	

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:24:03. Duties of a district after informal review.

File reviews, a review of data, and interviews with a variety of district staff suggested a problem with the district's referral process. Contrary to the district comprehensive plan, the procedures used within the district do not allow educators to initiate a referral without first going through the TAT process. A referral made verbally by a parent cannot be acted upon until that parent completes a district referral document. Through review of 21 files for high school students reviewers found 16 had no record of referral happening prior to the junior high level. Staff interviewed suggested there are an unusually high number of initial referrals during junior high and high school, frequently for behavior concerns.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

All referrals will be informally reviewed. TAT will be utilized as deemed appropriate by the referring person and the special education director while informing parents of their IDEA due process rights.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

Upon informal review, the District staff may make referrals through the District TAT or go directly to the Special Education Office with a referral.

Through tracking of referrals, the district will note that referrals come from parents and teachers at all grade levels.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

Parents will be informed of the results of the informal review through prior notice that will include a copy of parental rights.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
District staff is aware that referrals can be made through the TAT process or directly through the SPED office. Referrals are being tracked to note the grade level and referring person. Parents are given prior notice and informed of the informal review and given a copy of parent rights at the time of prior notice.	May, 2003 and ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
There were 41 referrals received during the fall of 2003; 40 of the referrals went to a full evaluation; 36 student files were reviewed to verify referral documentation; 30 referrals came from parents; 11 referrals came from teachers.	January, 2004

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:25:05. Eligibility and placement procedures.

Through file reviews and interviews the team concluded that parents are not always afforded the right to be involved in determining eligibility of their student or in making placement decisions.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

Parent input will be an integral part of the IEP eligibility and placement process.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

Parents will be involved in the eligibility determination.

Parents will be involved in the placement process.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

By January 15, 2003 the prior notice for evaluation will provide parental input into the evaluation process.

Prior notice for the meeting will invite parents to determine eligibility, develop an IEP and determine placement:

- 1.) Parents will attend the meeting and sign the MDT report.
- 2.) Parents will attend the IEP meeting and sign as a team member and sign consent.

Parent surveys will include questions about providing input into the eligibility and placement process.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

By May 2003 15% of all files will be reviewed by the Special Education Director and Special Education teachers to assure that this area has been addressed.

By May 2003 parent survey responses will show parent satisfaction on the questions regarding input into the eligibility and placement process positively 85% of the time.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
Parental input is included in the prior notice. The new SPED director will follow up on	January, 2003
the parent satisfaction surveys to address any concerns noted on parent input regarding	May, 2003
eligibility and placement.	
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
54 IEP meetings were held regarding eligibility and/or placement decisions. 100% or	January, 2004
54 of these meetings, included the parent as a participating member.	

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures.

In 73% of the student files reviewed and through interview, the monitoring team found the district to be unfamiliar with the functional assessment requirement. District staff did not include functional information in the evaluation process. District staff does not understand that this information is to be used for determining specific skills areas affected by the student's disability, eligibility, present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum and development of annual goals and short term instructional objectives. Functional assessment information is available through a variety of sources in the district, however, there is not an established process for administering, collecting, summarizing or integrating the information into the 25-day evaluation process for determining eligibility or developing the student's IEP.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

Functional Assessment information for each student in Special Education will be incorporated into their IEP.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmark:

After January 31, 2003 the evaluation report will reflect that functional assessment information is addressed in the multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report and incorporated into the goals and objectives of the IEP.

The MDT report will include information on functional assessment.

After January 31, 2003 functional assessment will be incorporated in the present levels of performance, goals and objectives.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

The multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report will include observational records and functional assessments.

The District will train staff in regards to doing functional assessment and implementing it into the evaluation process and the IEP process.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
Functional assessments are incorporated into each IEP.	May, 2003 and
-	ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
54 student evaluations were completed during the fall of 2003. Of the 54 evaluations completed, 49 of them included functional assessments. 28 MDT reports were written. 21 of these reports included functional assessments (This number does not include speech therapy data). Staff will receive an inservice on February 27, 2004 to insure that functional assessments are included on initial and 3 year reevaluations.	February 27, 2004

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:25:04.02. Determination of needed evaluation data.

Through review of 21 files of children referred but not placed and staff interviews the team concluded that in determining eligibility for emotional disturbances, the district considers academic performance through achievement scores and aptitude through IQ scores only. However, even when social emotional testing is also done and reveals scores falling in the clinically significant range, the other areas, crucial to determining eligibility are not considered. Eligibility determination for emotional disturbance should include information about such things as significant decline in overall academic performance, inability to concentrate and/or participate as directed by an adult not consistent with development, inability to attend school for emotional reasons, and inability to maintain relationships with adults and peers. One or more of these conditions may prevent the student from participating in classroom learning

Step 2 Desired Outcome

All students whose suspected disability is emotional disturbance will be evaluated in that area. All evaluation information will be presented and used to determine eligibility and to develop an IEP for each eligible child.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

All students whose referral includes behavioral or emotional concerns will have evaluations designed to address those concerns as well as testing in any other areas of concern.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

Counselors, administration and ALL teachers will be in-serviced on signs of Emotional Disturbance.

Staff will be trained to identify areas of concern for making a referral for students having social/emotional behavioral concerns.

The district will use the multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report to document eligibility.

The district will implement a tracking system to collect data in the area of Emotional Disturbance.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
All staff have been inserviced and trained on signs of ED and on referring students with social/emotional concerns. The school psychologist will continue to work with staff and will make classroom observations to identify students with needs.	May, 2003 and ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
There is a follow up training scheduled on February 27, 2004 to further train staff on	February 27,
the signs and criteria to identify emotionally disturbed students.	2004
Three (3) students were being tracked and/or evaluated during the fall of 2003 who presented emotional/behavioral concerns.	

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:25:11. Observation for specific learning disabilities.

At least one team member other than the child's regular teacher must observe the child's academic performance in the regular classroom setting. The team shall prepare a written report of the results of the evaluation for specific learning disabilities. The report must include a statement of the relevant behavior noted during the observations of the child.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

All students suspected of having a specific learning disability would be observed by a counselor or special education teacher.

All students with suspected disabilities would be observed, i.e. all other disability areas.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

Observations will be completed on all students referred.

Observation information will be considered when determining eligibility.

Observation information will be documented on the observation form attached to the multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

Counselors have been contacted to assist with classroom observations.

The student will be observed by the school counselor or by a special education teacher in his/her regular classroom setting.

An observation form was developed for implementation by January 31, 2003.

The district will implement a tracking system to collect data in the area of Specific Learning Disabilities.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
The school psychologist, counselors and SPED staff will insure that all LD students have the appropriate regular classroom observation(s).	Ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
27 files were reviewed during the fall of 2003. 100% or 27 of the files included a completed student observation if the student was suspected of having specific learning disabilities.	January, 2004

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

$Step\ 1\ Baseline\ Conclusion\ Summary\ \ {\color{blue} \underline{24:05:25:12.}}\ Written\ report\ for\ specific\ learning\ disabilities.$

Written reports for specific learning disabilities were not completed for six of twelve SLD files reviewed. Of the six available written reports, five contained incomplete information regarding the student observation or there was no evidence of an observation having been conducted. Staff interviews confirmed a recent awareness of the need to meet this requirement for student suspected as having a specific learning disability.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

The District will document Specific Learning Disabilities on a multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report form.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

Every initial and 3-year evaluation will have an accompanying multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report that includes observations.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

By February 2003 all special education teachers will complete the multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report and observation report.

100% of the 2003 initial and 3-year re-evaluations conducted within the Belle Fourche School District will have the multidisciplinary team assessment/eligibility report that encompasses all disabilities including specific learning disabilities with observation report included.

The district will implement a tracking system to collect data in the area of Specific Learning Disabilities.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
The multidisciplinary team assessments/eligibility reports are all part of all evaluations.	Ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
The multidisciplinary team assessments/eligibility reports are all part of all evaluations.	January, 2004
27 files were reviewed during the fall of 2003. 100% or 27 of the files included a completed written report for specific learning disabilities.	

Procedural Safeguards

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:30:05. Content of notice.

In three files reviewed parents were not provided a description of each evaluation procedures to be administered to their child. In two files reviewed, a description of the action proposed by the district was not included in the prior notice to the parents. In two other instances, a letter was sent to the parents informing them that a meeting was to be held. The letter did not contain any of the content required in written notice or assurances that the parents were afforded information regarding procedural safeguards.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

Written notices will contain ALL regulatory content.

These written notices to parents will be in layman's terms to describe procedures, types and descriptions of evaluations as well as identification and educational placement to provide the student FAPE (Free appropriate Public Education).

Prior notice, along with parental rights, will be sent to parents to obtain consent and to notify of an IEP meeting.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

Prior notices will be revised and consistent throughout the district and will describe the evaluation procedures that need to be administered.

Parental rights were published in the Belle Bee.

By May 2003 the Special Education computer network will reflect that parents were sent written notices containing the regulatory content and prior to any changes in the child's FAPE.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

The District will provide public awareness through local media.

May 2002 – State videos on parental rights/procedural placeguards were distributed to all SPED teachers as a parental informational resource.

Through the local media, parent groups will receive information on the Special Education process, i.e. referral, evaluation, FAPE, etc.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
Videos are available, media has published information and all SPED staff and administrators will have additional training on the prior notice procedure before September 1, 2003.	October, 2002 May, 2003 September, 2003
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress

The SPED staff will receive training on February 27, 2004 to insure proper documentation on prior notice forms.	February 27, 2004
27 parental written notices were reviewed and 100% or 27 met requirements	

Individualized Education Plan

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:25:26. Extended school year authorized.

Through interview, district staff stated they did not collect data to support or refute the need for extended year services by a student. The district might provide physical therapy or occupational therapy service to a student during the summer but does not identify it as extended school year services. Interviews also suggested the basis for determining that a student would receive extended school year service was parental request. Two IEPs did not specify what services would be provided/needed during extended school year. Three IEPs reviewed stated extended school year services were needed, however the length of the school day and duration of extended school year services based on the individual child's needs was not addressed.

According to data collected by state reviews, there were IEP's that were not complete in the area of extended school year designation, time, place and person's responsibility.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

The need for extended school year will be considered at every student's annual review meeting.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

All files reviewed will show that extended school year was considered and that the services, if any, are appropriately documented.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

New form would have check list attached to each IEP so that everything would be self-monitored by Special Ed. teachers.

The Special Education and regular education teachers will collect data during breaks or over the summer to determine eligibility for ESY.

The Belle Fourche School District has purchased the necessary technology (Omni-form) to correct concern about ESY.

By May 2003 the District will review ESY program tracking.

Staff training in Special Education will take place during early dismissals.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

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PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
ESY is considered at all annual reviews and forms are attached to the IEP.	September,
	2002
	Ongoing
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
Special Education and regular education teachers collect data during breaks and	January, 2004
throughout the school year to determine eligibility for ESY. A new form with a	
checklist is used for SPED teachers to self-monitor children. 69 students are currently	

being tracked for ESY.	

Individualized Education Plan

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary: 24:05:27.01.01. IEP Team.

In 50% of files for high school students for which in-depth file reviews were completed there was no evidence that a regular high school teacher attended the meeting. The guidance counselor was frequently present but he does not teach. Through interview with both special educators and regular educators, the monitoring team was able to verify that high school teachers do not attend the IEP meeting, instead they complete a form reflecting student information, performance and concerns.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

All IEP meetings will include the presence of at least one general education teacher.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

The appropriate general education teachers will be invited to attend IEP meetings and document their presence as a team member on the cover sheet of the IEP.

General education teachers unable to attend the meeting will provide written input prior to the IEP meeting.

The scheduling of the meetings will be the responsibility of the Special Ed. Teachers.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

Each general education teacher will receive a copy of the prior notice/invitation to the IEP meeting.

Special Ed. staff will schedule IEP meetings and document placement committee members (front page of IEP) and will be tracked on the Special Education tracking system.

Special Education Director will track and check for all required team members that are included on the IEP tracking form.

An input form will be routed to general education teachers invited to an IEP meeting who cannot attend.

This written input will become part of the present levels of performance documentation within the IEP document.

A form has been created to aid general education teachers in providing written input. The form includes Course Title, Teacher's name, Student Strengths, and Student Needs.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

PROGRESS REPORT	
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress
High school teachers are in attendance at IEP meetings and input forms are included	Ongoing
as necessary.	
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress
36 student files were reviewed during the fall of 2003. Regular education teachers	February 27,
were included in 100% of the IEP meetings. On February 27 th , 2004 all SPED staff	2004
will receive training on use of proper forms.	

Individualized Education Plan

Belle Fourche District 09-1 Improvement Plan

Step 1 Baseline Conclusion Summary 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the students identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gather during the comprehensive evaluation process. In all files reviewed, present levels of performance were not linked to evaluation and did not contain the student's academic strengths, needs or their involvement in the general curriculum.

Therefore, the student's annual goals were not consistently written as measurable or observable skills linked to the present levels of performance and did not represent what the student could reasonably accomplish within a 12-month period.

Step 2 Desired Outcome

The IEP for each student will include all required content.

Step 3 Evidence of Change & Benchmarks

By Sept. 30, 2002 new IEP form will be used that includes an area to document student strengths and weaknesses.

Step 4 Improvement Strategies

IEPs will be written on laptops with parents and students present and they will be able to add their statements about strengths and weaknesses of the student.

The District will train staff on the Special Education process.

In-service on Omni-forms for IEP forms – August 23^{rd} & August 27^{th} , 2002 (1-4:00) was held (show and tell of IEP set up and questions and answers).

PROGRESS REPORT		
Please describe and explain each data source used to verify that improvement occurred	6 month progress	
New IEP forms are in place, lap tops and Omni forms are being used	September,	
	2002	
Please describe and explain the data source used to verify that improvement occurred	12 month progress	
36 student files were reviewed during the fall of 2003. 100% of the files reviewed	February 27,	
included a present levels of performance page that identified strengths and needs and	2004	
an area for parental input into strengths and needs. On February 27, 2004, SPED staff		
will receive training to insure proper documentation of present levels of performance.		